

The demographic area is not racially or ethnically diverse. In the demographic area 99.4%, or 1713 people identified themselves as White racially. These statistics are similar to Macon County where 96.7% of the population identified themselves as racially White. The demographic area statistics contrast with Swain County overall where 67.3% of the population identified themselves as White racially and 27.0% of the population identify themselves as American Indian or Alaskan Native racially. The Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indian population is centered in Qualla Boundary, located northeast of the demographic area. Ethnically, both Macon and Swain Counties have a relatively small but growing Hispanic or Latino population. However, few members of this community were present in the demographic area according to the 2000 census.

### *Seasonal Population*

The official reported population likely under represents the actual population of the area during the Spring, Summer and Fall. This area has a large number of seasonal residents who are officially counted as residents of other areas. Although the actual number of seasonal residents is difficult to determine, the number can be estimated by examining the number of vacant homes reported as being used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. Based on Census data, the average household size in the Demographic Area is equal to 2.65. If it is assumed that approximately this many people reside in each of the residences during the warmer seasons, the population in the area may increase by 1,058 people or 61.4%, as presented below in **Table 6** below. This mirrors the observations of the Town of Franklin which estimates that it's population doubles during tourism seasons.

**Table 6: Seasonal Population**

	Population Growth 1990 - 2000				Homes used for Seasonal, Recreational or Occasional Use	
	Pop. 1990	Pop. 2000	#	%	#	%
Demographic Area	1,201	1,723	522	43.5%	*1,058	61.4%
Macon County	23,504	29,806	6,307	26.8%	*15,324	51.4%
Swain County	11,208	12,973	1,760	15.7%	*3,457	26.7%
North Carolina	6,628,631	8,049,313	1,420,682	21.4%	*378,014	4.7%

\*Seasonal Population numbers are estimates derived by the number of homes reported as vacant used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use by the average household size, for each demographic unit. Source: 2000 and 1990 Census.

### *Age*

According to the 2000 Census, a large number of older residents live in the demographic area. The median age in the demographic area is approximately 46.2 years. This is higher than the median age in Macon County at 45.5 years and higher than Swain County at 39.3 years. The median age in the demographic area and the two counties are over ten years higher than North Carolina's median age of 35.1 years. The presence of older residents is likely a combination of two factors. Long term residents remain in the rural area, while their children or other younger people move to other areas for employment or career opportunities. New residents, retirees or established workers, move into the area for visual and natural amenities.